



Water Quality NewsFlash

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Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) – Board schedules second workshop

On August 31, the State Water Resources Control Board held a workshop to hear testimony concerning the Board's program to enforce a ban on the discharge of wastes to ASBS. ASBS are designated locations along the California coast that require additional protection from environmental disturbances. Discharges to ASBS, including stormwater runoff, must be terminated unless the dischargers apply for and receive an exception to the discharge prohibition in the Ocean Plan. On August 31, the State Board held a workshop to receive stakeholder comments on the Board's ASBS program (see *NewsFlash* 05-38). Both the prohibition and the exception process are controversial issues that have received much interest from coastal municipalities and other stormwater dischargers (including Caltrans), as well as from environmental groups. The Board has scheduled a second workshop on October 24, 2005, in San Pedro. <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/plnspols/oplans/asbs.html>

CASQA – First Annual Conference – The *California Stormwater Quality Association* (CASQA) includes local governments, businesses, and others interested in the advancement of stormwater management, science, and regulation. CASQA's first Annual Conference – October 3, 4, and 5 – included a full-day pre-conference workshop on hydromodification (see *NewsFlash* 04-48) and subsequent sessions ranging from specific pollutant issues to recent legal developments. Caltrans received awards in two categories: *Outstanding Statewide Stormwater Research Project* for the BMP Retrofit Pilot Program (report at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/stormwater/>) and *Outstanding Statewide News, Information, Outreach, and Media Project* for the *NewsFlash* (yea!). Several of the sessions covered Caltrans research, construction, and management activities including a presentation by Tim Sobleman on the selection of BMPs during the project design phase (Caltrans Design website included recently updated *Project Planning and Design Guide*, and related documents: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/opdp/stormwtr/>). CASQA website: <http://www.casqa.org/>

Hawaii DOT – Enforcement action settled – U.S. EPA and the Hawaii Department of Health initiated enforcement against the Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) for violating provisions of the construction and industrial stormwater permits, as well as its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit for Oahu. As part of the settlement, HDOT will pay \$1 million in penalties to the U.S. and the state and will have to implement management and control efforts estimated at \$50 million over the next 5 years. Consent Decree and Complaint: <http://www.usdoj.gov/enrd/open.html> Article: http://www.stormwaterauthority.org/library/view_article.aspx?id=292

Lake Tahoe – Good news: clarity improves – Information presented at the recent Tahoe Summit indicates that the clarity of the lake is improving. Clarity had been generally declining since measurements began in the 1960s. Causes of reduced clarity include fine particles (60%), algae resulting from nutrients (25%), and dissolved material (15%). Caltrans has invested significant resources in the Tahoe area for controlling runoff from both existing roads and construction projects. Article: <http://www.tahoe-world.com/article/20050821/NEWS/50821001>

WQ NewsFlash is a weekly update of storm water and related news for the Department. *Verify information before taking action on these bulletins.* Contact Betty Sanchez, Betty_Sanchez@dot.ca.gov (916) 653-2115, or Fred Krieger, (510) 843-7889, fkrieger@msn.com with questions or to be added or deleted from e-mail list. Posted online at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/stormwater/publicat/newsflash/index.htm>